Since we last spoke...

Dr. Joseph Heim: We are proud to announce that he will be the newest recipient of the Presidential Gala Award for Research! Congratulations!

Dr. Paul Crawford presented a paper at a crusades conference in Avignon, France, and also visited various sites in southern France relating to the Albigensian Crusade and to the medieval papacy. He’s helping two colleagues edit a volume of conference papers dealing with the trial of the Templars, and he’s teaching a course in Latin, History and Paleography during Fall semester. Next semester he’ll be offering his Crusades course again.

Dr. Andrae Marak will be attending the American Historical Association conference in January to present on transnational vice, contraband and crime in the El Paso-Ciudad Juarez corridor. Also, his book, From Many, One: Indians, Peasants, Borders, and Education in Callista Mexico, 1924-1935 is being published in December by the University of Calgary Press.

Dr. Melanie Blumberg ran a series of extremely successful programming in connection with the presidential election. In cooperation with Cal Campaign Consultants, College Republicans and College Democrats and the American Democracy Project, there were debate watches for each debate, an election night watch, a debate between the officers of the College Democrats and the College Republicans, a roundtable discussion, all capped off with an Election Analysis Forum. She also plans to hold an inauguration day event on January 20th in the Performance Center. It will be an all day event, though, of course, the main event will be at noon.

Dr. Kelton Edmonds, who is also now the Chair of the Frederick Douglass Institute, has been working hard on planning Black History month with the BHM planning committee. Former history major Tim Williams is the GA for FDI, and has been helping with the planning, as well.

Dr. Clarissa Confer officially joined our ranks this semester, as has Dr. Craig Smith. Dr. Confer’s specialties focus on Native American history, Dr. Smith is both our connection to secondary education and a historian who specializes in law. He is the new advisor for the Pre-Law Society. Check out the interview with him on page 2!

Dr. Laura Tuennerman will also be returning to the department after a successful term as Interim Dean. While we will miss her as dean, we’re all very excited to have her back. Her focus is on public history and nineteenth century history.

Cindy Lynn Speer has been trying to stay as busy as her faculty. She held two successful book signings, and has been working with members of the Cal U Fencing club to have events on campus and even create a college of the Society of Creative Anachronism on campus. This would allow the club to arrange to have more demos of historical fighting as well as medieval dancing and other arts from that period.

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Special points of interest:

- Look out for a huge schedule of events for Black History Month!
- Also, don’t miss the Hip Hop Forum next April.
- The Student Organizations are more active than ever...contact us for more information on College Democrats, College Republicans, Cal Campaign Consultants, Fencing Club, History Club, Equestrian Club and More!
Dr. Craig Smith was born and raised in historic town of Lincoln, Nebraska. Upon finishing High School Dr. Smith attended the University of Arizona and received his B.A. in Dramatic Arts. To think that our very own Professor of Constitutional Law once had aspirations of becoming the next Lord of the Dance might come as a shock, but after deciding that the stage wasn’t for him Dr. Smith acquired his teaching certificate and was hired on by a local high school as a debate coach and history teacher. At this time he was raising a family and decided to obtain his Masters in History at the University of Missouri at Kansas City where his love for history swelled and blossomed into the great Professor we know and love today.

During my interview with Dr. Smith I asked him what was a most memorable moment in his life. He replied “I remember the day of Sept 11th; I was in the cafeteria at the high school I was teaching at...I was conducting a school fund raiser and was giving out prizes to the students; I walked into the office where one of the secretaries told me the Pentagon was on fire”. Dr. Smith simply replied “Well somebody should put it out”. After realizing what was really going on he, like the rest of us, made sure his family was ok and spent the remainder of the day pondering our fate.

Dr. Smith advised me his favorite course to teach is American History. This love is two fold, one because of his passion for our nation’s upbringing and the second due to his students who typically take the course. His experience with this lower level course has always been students who had to take the course as part of their curriculum. He loves the challenge of trying to present to them the importance of knowing our past and how it can shed light on our future.

On a personal level Dr. Smith shared with me his favorite hobby, the construction of models. He loves building models of every kind, including cars, ships and rockets. However, this love has increased over time with the involvement of his children who also share the same passion, especially taking them apart. Our kid at heart professor admitted that as a child he himself at one time wanted to grow up and be a garbage man, pointing out the cool ability of hanging off the back of the truck as his favorite part. I asked Dr. Smith if he could have any one superhero power in the world what would it be. He replied “I want to fly so I can see the world”.

So who is the real Dr. Smith you ask? What is he like outside of the expensive suits and impossible tests? Believe it or not you will find our reserved professor typically jamming loudly to his favorite rock group KISS, filling his fridge at home with anything but beef and soda, chilling on the couch at home watching his favorite all time actor Bruce Willis (who will play the part of Dr. Smith when they make a movie of his life) and eating a sandwich where you can be sure the mustard is on the meat side of the bread, not the cheese side.

On September 25 the Cal U community welcomed Tommie Smith onto campus for what would be a memorable and engaging evening. Smith is perhaps best known for his silent protest during the 200 meter award ceremony at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics games.

Dr. Smith’s speaking engagement marked the key-note event of this year’s Sports History Round-table. Fall 2008 marks the third year of the annual round-table, which has continued to grow every year since its conception by the History Department’s own Dr. Kelton Edmonds.

Though Tommie Smith served as the keynote of the event, it is important to note that student involvement remained. Prior to the evening’s keynote, a student debate was held in the Duda World Cultures Building. The Debate featured students from Lockhaven University squaring off against some of Cal U’s finest. The debate topic this year was “Should the Olympic Stage be Used as a Political/Social Platform” with Cal U arguing against and Lockhaven arguing for. The California team was made up of students Erica Smeltzer, Kenneth Hager, Natalie Morrow, John Kirk, and Jesse Wiser. The Round-table debate was so popular that space in the auditorium was filled to capacity as he delivered his speech “My Stand, Your Challenge”, which touched on his experiences at the 1968 games and the aftermath, while attempting to get students to see causes bigger than themselves. Students seemed inspired by Smith’s experiences as evident by the standing ovation given to Dr. Smith. After his speech, a question/answer period between Dr. Smith and students took place, followed by a poster and book signing.

Events such as the Sports History Roundtable continue a tradition on the Cal U campus of faculty and students going beyond the standard classroom in order to enrich the community of a whole. The greatest award for those that contributed to this year’s roundtable has to be the great turn out by the students of Cal U, which shows that there will always be a demand on campus for such enriching events.
Piracy a Huge Success at Cal U article by Captain "Keep Working You Lubbers!" Speer

Not internet or media Piracy, of course, but the event “The Many Faces of Piracy”, master-minded by the History Department’s own Michael Slaven.

The three day event began on September 17th, as the American Democracy Project and the History Department celebrated Constitution Day with speaker, Nick J. Scuillo, who explained the parallels between piracy and our own Constitution. Nick Roberts added a talk about primary resources. The event continued with singer Geoffrey Kauffmann, who performed several songs of the sea, explaining their meaning and context. Dean John Cencich, Dr. Marak, Dr. Blumberg, Dr. Confer and Dr. Slaven then come together for a roundtable on Democracy and Piracy. In the evening, Geoff Kauffman returned to the stage with more chants, and this time he encouraged the audience to sing along. Since this took place in a smaller venue, the Black Box Theater, the intimacy and the audience singing along created a great energy, making for a wonderful experience.

The second day was jammed tightly with exciting events. John Lennox, Chris J. Franklin and Steve Huff returned to campus to do demonstrations of historical swordsmanship, this time with a pirate theme. Dressed in period costume, these three men spent both Thursday and Friday demonstrating techniques ranging from knife fighting to how one would board a ship. Author Cynthia Vallar held two sessions on piracy, one covering what pirates wore, the other discussing medicine. Our keynote speaker, Colin Woodard, author of The Republic of Pirates, held an excellent talk on his research and the end of piracy in the Caribbean, which was followed by a costume contest hosted by a Jack Sparrow impersonator and a showing of the movie Captain Blood.

The third and final day of the event made sure to spotlight other forms of piracy. Dr. Mike Hummel spoke on modern piracy and security, followed by Cynthia Vallar’s final session, which was also on Modern Piracy. Former faculty Tim Konhaus returned to campus to discuss African and African Americans and piracy, there were also panels on Islamic Piracy and Piracy Art. Since that Friday was also “Talk Like a Pirate Day” students were encouraged to dress in piratical fashion and speak in pirate slang. There were also free eye patches passed out to students.

The events were all well attended, proving that academics and fun can indeed be combined to create a unique and memorable experience.

The Pirates of Cal U: The winner of the costume contest brandishes her new prize while Captain Jack Sparrow watches (photo credit SAI), John Lennox and Steven Huff do a demo on knife fighting (photo credit Bobbie Burns), Erica McGrath shows off how cool she looks in the coat Cindy made for the event, and, finally, Chris J. Franklin teaches some sword fighting to Mike Slaven’s son, Lee (photo credits, Cindy Speer.)
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The Audrey Beth Fitch Scholarship: Benefits students who would like to go and present papers at conferences.

The Deborah and Joe Hardy Scholarship: Given to a Political Science Students who are either a Junior or Senior, with a 3.0 grade point average and a demonstrable financial need. Yearly.

The Edna B. McKenzie Prize: Created by June Dowdy in memory of her mother, this prize goes to a History major who has earned at least 60 credits and have a GPA of at least 3.0. Yearly.

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